

Amputation

What is an amputation?

- A limb that is lost due to poor circulation or trauma. This may include above- or below- the knee, above- or below- the elbow.
- Riders may ride with, or without a prosthetic limb. Advancements in prosthetics mean that specialty “riding” leg can be of benefit.

Benefits from riding with RDA

- **Poor Balance--** As the horse moves the rider is constantly thrown off balance, requiring the rider’s muscles to contract and relax in an attempt to re-balance. This exercising is similar to physiotherapy, reaching the deep muscles, but making the therapy more enjoyable and even fun. The three-dimensional rhythmic movement of the horse is similar to the motion of walking, teaching rhythmical patterns to the muscles of the legs and trunk. By placing the rider in different positions on the horse (therapeutic riding), we can work different sets of muscles. Stopping and starting the horse, changing the speed and direction increases the benefits.
- **Strengthened Muscles--** Muscles are strengthened by the increased use involved in riding. Even though riding is exercise, it is perceived as enjoyment, therefore the rider has increased tolerance and motivation to lengthen the period of exercise.
- **Improved Respiration and Circulation-** Although riding is not normally considered cardiovascular activity, trotting and cantering do increase both respiration and circulation.
- **Psychological Benefits-** Horse riding and learning new skills creates a sense of wellbeing, increasing confidence and motivation and general self-worth.

Adaptive Equipment- Adaptive equipment helps riders to participate in a sport to the best of their ability. This includes competition opportunities. Learning to control the horse and other skills provides riders with a sense of achievement.

- Special equipment may include reins with loops, special saddle adaptations, rule modification for using two whips, ramps and hoists for assisted mounting. Horses are trained to understand the aids of the rider.
- Additional supports are provided while a rider is learning to adapt their balance and coordination including a leader for the horse and side walkers to provide assistance as required to the rider